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'Hand' stays the b.o. course for Buena Vista

By Anita M. Busch

Buena Vista Pictures had much to celebrate over the four-day holiday weekend as "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" grabbed the top boxoffice spot for the second week in a row, according to industry estimates.

The Buena Vista thriller pulled in an estimated $13 million over the four-day holiday, bringing its earnings to about $20 million to date.

Buena Vista continues to hold three of the top 10 boxoffice spots, with the distributor's other two features, "Father of the Bride" and "Beauty and the Beast," remaining strong.

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Boxoffice

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(Because of the Martin Luther King holiday on Monday, final grosses and the weekly boxoffice chart will appear in Wednesday's paper.)

"Bride" garnered an estimated $6.5 million to bring its total to almost $58 million to date, while "Beauty" added approximately $4.5 million, edging the film closer to becoming the first animated feature to hit the $100 million mark, having taken in a little over $93 million to date.

Also pushing the $100 million mark is Steven Spielberg's fantasy adventure "Hook," which added another $6 million to the TriStar release's booty for a total take of $96 million, according to estimates.

Paramount's "Juice" earned approximately $9 million on 1,089 screens during the four-day holiday, grabbing the No. 2 spot away from "Hook." The urban actioner from first-time director Ernest Dickerson rallied for a very respectable $8,264 per-screen average, according to studio estimates.

Also opening this weekend was "FreeJack," the Warner Bros. sci-fi thriller starring Emilio Estevez and Mick Jagger. The film, which was shown in 1,551 arenas, chased in an estimated $7.5 million in business for a per-screen average of almost $5,000.

Twentieth Century Fox's "Grand Canyon" made an impressive showing in its third week in release, bringing in about $6.2 million or a $7,760 per-screen average. Fox more than doubled its screens for the Lawrence Kasdan contemporary drama this week, from 364 to 803 venues.

Warner Bros.' "JFK" and Columbia Pictures' "Prince of Tides" were neck in neck over the weekend, earning an estimated $6.3 million and $6.2 million, respectively. "Tides" and "JFK" also won recognition from the Hollywood Foreign Press Assn. over the weekend by winning Golden Globes for best actor (Nick Nolte) and best director (Oliver Stone), respectively.

"Tides," directed by Barbra Streisand, has rolled in approximately $46 million to date. The controversial Stone film, which stars Kevin Costner, has now tallied $44.2 million, according to estimates.

Best drama Golden Globe winner "Bugsy" slipped from the top 10, bringing in a disappointing $3 million over the four-day weekend for TriStar, according to estimates. The Barry Levinson film, which stars Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, had an estimated $2,500 per-screeen average.

The Christian Slater comedy "Kuffs" rounded out the top 10, bringing in an estimated $3.6 million in its second week in release for Universal Pictures.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros.' action film "The Last Boy Scout" dropped screens and boxoffice dollars to pull in only about $2.3 million over the holiday weekend. □